



Frequently Asked Questions

## General Information about *Fusarium* Keratitis

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### Questions and Answers

#### What is keratitis?

Keratitis is an inflammation of the cornea, the front part of the eye. Keratitis has many causes including bacteria, viruses and fungi. CDC is currently investigating reports of keratitis caused by *Fusarium*, a type of fungus.

While *Fusarium* keratitis can be a serious infection, it is a rare disease. *Fusarium* is commonly found in organic matter such as soil and plants. This infection cannot be transmitted from person to person. People who have trauma to the eye, certain eye diseases and problems with their immune system may be at increased risk for these types of infection.

#### Is *Fusarium* keratitis due to a type of contact lens solution?

CDC is investigating the possible risk factors for developing *Fusarium* keratitis. Preliminary data show that a high proportion of cases reported using a Bausch & Lomb ReNu contact lens solution. On April 13, 2006, Bausch & Lomb announced that it was withdrawing all ReNu with MoistureLoc products and is recommending that consumers stop using ReNu with MoistureLoc immediately.

#### What is CDC doing about the reports of *Fusarium* keratitis?

CDC is working with state and local health departments, the US Food and Drug Administration, and the US Department of Agriculture to evaluate reports of *Fusarium* keratitis, conduct a study to determine factors associated with *Fusarium* keratitis, and conduct surveillance to determine the scope of the outbreak. In addition, CDC is partnering with FDA and the South Carolina Department of Health to do an on-site evaluation of Bausch & Lomb plant in Greenville, SC.

Results of the investigation will help identify measures that can be put into place to prevent further infections related to contact lens wear. Eye doctors treating patients for keratitis caused by fungi are urged to report these infections to their state health department to aid in this investigation.

**How many cases have been reported so far?**

As of May 9, 2006, CDC has received reports of 106 confirmed cases, 12 possible cases and 80 cases still under investigation from 32 U.S. states and territories. 69 reports include insufficient evidence to classify them as cases or carry other non-Fusarium diagnoses. States or territories with at least 1 confirmed or possible case include: AR, AZ, CA, CT, FL, GA, IA, IL, KS, KY, LA, MA, MD, MI, MO, NC, ND, NJ, NY, OH, OK, PA, PR, TN, TX and VT. States where all cases under investigation include: IN, MN, MS, NV, OR and RI.

**Recommendations for healthcare providers:**

- Advise patients to stop using Bausch & Lomb ReNu with MoistureLoc products immediately and use an alternative cleaning/disinfecting product.
- If a patient presents with a microbial keratitis, consider that a fungal infection may be involved, especially if the patient wears contact lenses.
- Prior to initiating immediate treatment, obtain a specimen for culture.
- Report cases of fungal keratitis in contact lens wearers to FDA as noted below.

**Recommendations for contact lens wearers:**

- Stop using Bausch & Lomb ReNu with MoistureLoc products.
- Consult your eye care professional concerning use of an appropriate alternative cleaning/disinfecting product.
- Consider performing a “rub and rinse” lens cleaning method, rather than a no rub method, regardless of which cleaning/disinfecting solution used, in order to minimize the number of germs and reduce the chances of infection.
- Continue to follow proper lens care practices:
  - Wash hands with soap and water, and dry (lint-free method) before handling lenses.
  - Wear and replace lenses according to the schedule prescribed by your doctor.
  - Follow the specific lens cleaning and storage guidelines from your doctor and the solution manufacturer.
  - Keep the contact lens case clean and replace every 3-6 months.
  - Remove the lenses and consult your doctor immediately if you experience symptoms such as redness, pain, tearing, increased light sensitivity, blurry vision, discharge or swelling.

**For more information see the following links:**

- Specific information on these investigations
  - <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm55d410a1.htm>
  - <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2006/NEW01354.html>
  - <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/safety/041006-keratitis.html>
- General information on fungal eye infections
  - <http://www.doctorfungus.org/mycoses/human/other/eyeinfections.htm>
- General information on *Fusarium*

- <http://www.doctorfungus.org/thefungi/fusarium.htm>

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